

The Monitor®

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Published for the Fort Bliss/El Paso, Texas Community

Feb. 7, 2008






WEEKEND OUTLOOK

FORT BLISS

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		
Sunny Hi 66, Lo 38	Sunny Hi 68, Lo 39	Sunny, nice Hi 73, Lo 42

BAGHDAD, IRAQ

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		
Mostly sunny Hi 69, Lo 47	Sunny Hi 69, Lo 47	Sunny, nice Hi 71, Lo 47



3-43 returns

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Texas vs. The Nation

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WILSON A. RIVERA

Soldiers Field unveiled

Maj. Gen. Howard B. Bromberg, commanders and staff lead 2nd Battalion, 6th Air Defense Artillery Soldiers on the first lap around the unit's new one-eighth-mile track, during an unveiling ceremony held Friday at Soldiers Field. For more on this story, see Page 16.

CG updates Juarez policy

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

Based on the continued violence in Juarez, Mexico, I will keep Juarez off-limits to servicemembers assigned to Fort Bliss. Current conditions in Juarez continue to present an unacceptable risk to the health, safety, welfare and morale of military personnel.

Servicemembers are ordered not to travel to, enter or be in Juarez, until further notice. A violation of this order may result in disciplinary action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice or adverse administrative action.

I will periodically re-evaluate this restriction based on updated assessments by the installation's Antiterrorism/Force Protection officer. Once the restriction is lifted, all U.S. citizens, including Soldiers, must have either a passport or an original or certified copy of their birth certificate and a government-issued photo ID to reenter the U.S. For additional information, refer to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs Web site found at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2233.html.

Brigade-level commanders may approve travel to Juarez for emergency situations. Brigade commanders will not delegate this approval authority.

I strongly urge family members, DoD civilians and all other members of Team Bliss – to include foreign military students

– not to travel to Juarez, although they are not restricted by this order.

This order does not affect travel to other areas of Mexico. Servicemembers will fol-

low the requirements of AR 600-8-10 and AR 525-13 for travel to other parts of Mexico.

Safety measures a top priority on post

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST MARSHAL

Based on various safety incidents that have recently occurred, it is clear prevention and safety should be a huge concern for Soldiers and their families. The community needs to be aware that even though they and their families may follow safety guidelines, there are those on and off the installation who do not, putting themselves and their families in danger of being victimized.

With a joint effort between the Directorate of Emergency Services and the community, the majority of incidents are preventable. Some major safety concerns on this post are seat belts, motorcycle safety, DWIs, cell phone usage without a hands-free device and theft. The DES has conducted multiple checkpoints to verify individuals are following the rules of the road.

During the three days of DES checkpoints, there were 81 citations for speeding, 19 drivers with no liability insurance, 17 driving with an invalid license, 13 expired safety stickers, 10 with no driver's license in possession, nine with

expired license plates and three DUIs. These facts show indicators of disconcert with the rules of the road. All of us, as responsible citizens of this community, must get involved, and it all starts with you.

Using your seat belt increases your chance of surviving a serious accident by 40 to 60 percent. (40 percent in cars, and 60 percent in light trucks). In fiscal year 2007, five out of the seven off-post fatalities involved Soldiers not wearing a seat-belt. The Military Police and the DES are using methods to enforce seat belt usage such as holding random seat belt check points and issuing citations to those not obeying the law. Seat belts save lives.

Motorcycle safety is also a pressing concern. The DES will be conducting checks on inbound motorcycles for proper protective gear, valid safety course requirements, registration and insurance. All leaders must also contribute by conducting thorough safety briefings and frequent vehicle inspections.

Another prevalent and preventable

See **SAFETY**, Page 2

Commentary

Troop Talk

This week’s column will include answers to the additional questions that were received during a visit to 5th Battalion, 52nd Air Defense Artillery, two weeks ago.

With the addition of so many new Soldiers to the installation, are there any plans in place to build a club for junior enlisted Soldiers?

As a part of non-appropriated-fund major construction projects, a funding request has been submitted to build a Junior Enlisted Club on Biggs Army Airfield. This facility will feature an entertainment center with interactive games, video games and other entertainment related equipment, a snack bar with an outdoor patio, party and meeting rooms and a lounge.

Are there any plans to add lanes to the gates in order to facilitate entry into the installation?

Most current access control points are constructed in areas of urban encroachment and do not allow for the expansion of additional lanes. There are, however, plans to increase the number of ECPs in key locations on Biggs Army Airfield to support growth in the east BAAF area.

The traffic light at the intersection of Fred Wilson and Chaffee is programmed to favor traffic moving on Fred Wilson. Is there a way we can get it reprogrammed to allow more time to exit and enter the Chaffee gate?

The traffic light at the intersection of Fred Wilson and Chaffee access control point is programmed to facilitate traffic flow on the road that has the highest traffic volume. In this particular case, that road is Fred Wilson. The director of emergency services will coordinate with the Texas Department of Transportation and the city of El Paso to ensure the light cycle is set to optimize traffic flow, given our increase in volume.



With the increase of Soldiers and family members to the installation, is there a plan in place to cut down on the average waiting time at the William Beaumont Army Medical Center emergency room? In some cases, Soldiers have waited up to seven hours to be seen.

We recognize this problem can sometimes occur in same-day acute care. WBAMC has active recruitment actions for additional providers that will supplement both our Urgent Care and Primary Care clinics within the next 30 days to reduce the time spent in the emergency room. WBAMC understands the critical mission of providing quality acute care, and we are actively seeking ways to improve our capabilities and services to the Soldier and family members.

Soldiers have been told the pediatric clinic at WBAMC is cutting back on services and the clinic has lost a significant amount of their staff. What is the plan to increase services to accommodate the increase of Fort Bliss Soldiers?

The WBAMC pediatric clinic is not reducing services at WBAMC. The staff is in the process of increasing access to care over the next several months by hiring seven additional providers who will see pediatric patients. The Urgent Care Clinic that is operational between 5 and 9 p.m., Monday through Friday has increased its staff by one provider who will see pediatric patients. The pediatric neurologist who was deployed has returned and we are able to see pediatric neurology cases in the hospital. Additionally, we are able to see pediatric gastro and pediatric cardiology cases within the hospital. All specialty care that is not available within WBAMC is referred to the Tricare Network.

Maj. Gen. Howard B. Bromberg
Fort Bliss Commanding General

Safety

Continued from Page 1

safety concern is DWIs. Motor vehicle operators driving under the influence are not only putting themselves and their passengers at risk, but also innocent members of the community. The DES is focusing various efforts to deter and prevent drivers from driving drunk. The DES provides traffic safety and drunken driving prevention classes for units during their safety day stand downs, and the crime prevention section provides driver awareness training for Soldiers, family members and civilians. Additionally, the DES conducts random safety checkpoints to check drivers’ valid and proper documentation, compliance with the rules and regulations of the road, and the sobriety of the driver. Moreover, the DES conducts specialized enforcement geared toward indentifying and apprehending drunken drivers, and ensuring they are off the streets and in jail. Leaders are required to emphasize the severity of the consequences for driving under the influence and demand the use of responsible drinking. A huge aspect of responsible drinking is not driving under the influence and designating a driver.

An additional safety concern that puts drivers and pedestrians at risk is cell phone usage with out a hands-free device. Using a cell phone while driving is against Army regulations and dangerous to everyone if the driver is not focused. There are many outside factors for the everyday driver. For example, specifically on Fort Bliss, many of the housing areas are near high traffic areas, such as the Kelly Park housing area near the PX. Children are frequently near these roads and drivers need to be aware of children running in front of vehicles. Parking lots are also dangerous because of the limited visibility and low reaction time due to limited space.

There are construction areas on Fort Bliss. Some of these areas have obstructions that narrow the roadways and can require more control over the vehicles direction. Cell phone usage without a hands-free device is an unnecessary distraction that inhibits the safety of the Fort Bliss community. With the everyday distractions drivers must be more vigilant and aware of their surroundings.

The DES systems in place are meant to protect the community, but the community must also take an active role by fostering prevention and safety in their own lives through compliance with the laws and regulations to keep Fort Bliss safe.

Be smart, do your part – vote

The Unit Voting Assistance Officer must ensure all Soldiers are provided instructions on how the absentee voting process works. First, Soldiers must understand the need to register in advance for their absentee ballot. They must also understand the absentee ballot deadlines imposed by their state of residence. The UVAO can assist Soldiers and their voting-age family members with individual state information, along with other important facts about faxing absentee ballots, the use of federal write-in ballots and mailing deadlines. The implementing instructions can be viewed at www.vote.army.mil.

For more information, call (703) 325-4530 or e-mail alton.c.perry@conus.army.mil.

1-43 ADA remembers fallen Soldier

2ND LT. ADRIAN SAYERS
1st Bn., 43rd ADA

Soldiers, friends and family of the 1st Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery, gathered Jan. 29 to pay tribute to the loss of one of their own, Staff Sgt. Garfield Darnell Green.

Green, the A Battery supply sergeant, was killed Jan. 11 in a motorcycle accident while returning home from a field training exercise.

The service was held at Sage Hall and was attended by all the Soldiers in the battalion as well as Brig. Gen. Robert Woods and Command Sgt. Maj. Sidney Weatherspoon, the com-



**Staff Sgt.
Garfield
Darnell Green**

manding general and command sergeant major of 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command.

Lt. Col. John Chavez, 1-43 ADA commander, spoke on the recent accomplishments of the Soldiers in Green’s battery, describing them as “remarkable” and “amazing,” and cited the critical role Green had in achieving success as a unit.

manding general and command sergeant major of 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command.

Lt. Col. John Chavez, 1-43 ADA commander, spoke on the recent accomplishments

“The death of a Soldier under my command is the hardest thing I’ve ever dealt with,” said Capt. Matthew Rawlings, A Btry. commander. “We will remember Staff Sgt. Green by soldiering on and continuing with our mission.”

First Sgt. Curtis Hobson conducted the final roll call, followed by the firing volley and the playing of taps.

At the conclusion of the service, Soldiers lined up to render their final salutes as a tribute to the life and service of their brother in arms.

Green is survived by his wife Philomena and their four children.

2007 DWIs by brigade/unit

	6th BDE	11th BDE	31ST BDE	4/1 CAV	1st AR DIV	GARRISON	WBAMC	FM/CIV	OTHER TENANT UNITS	OTHER MIL	TOTAL
DATE											
JAN - MAR	2			6	2			2			12
	2/6 ADA			2-7 CAV x4	1ST CAB						
				1-9 CAV	5TH AR CAV						
				5-82 FA							
TOTAL	2	0	0	6	2	0	0	2	0	0	12

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All photos are U.S. Army unless otherwise designated.

The Monitor’s classified ad page is a free service reserved for active duty personnel, military retirees, military family members and DAC’s only. Because there is no fee, the only advertisements permitted to be published on this page are ads that

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Rules change on travel to Mexico for all U.S. citizens

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

The U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs posts information pertinent to Mexico as well as other countries in the world at www.travel.state.gov.

Land or sea travelers to Mexico must have a valid U.S. passport or citizenship document – such as a certified copy of a U.S. birth certificate, a naturalization certificate, a consular report of birth abroad, or a certificate of citizenship – along with photo identification, such as a state- or military-issued ID, in order to enter or exit the country. For the latest entry requirements, visit the Embassy of Mexico Web site at <http://portal.sre.gob.mx/usa/> or contact the Embassy of Mexico at (202) 736-1000 or any Mexican consulate in the U.S.

Visitors should be aware of their surroundings at all times, even when in areas generally considered safe. U.S. citizens should be very cautious when using ATMs in Mexico. If an ATM must be used, it should be accessed only during the business day at large, protected facilities, preferably inside commercial establishments rather than at glass-enclosed, highly visible ATMs on streets. U.S. and Mexican citizens are sometimes accosted on the street and forced to withdraw money from their accounts using their ATM cards.

Armed street crime is a serious problem in all of the major cities. Some bars and nightclubs can be havens for drug dealers and petty criminals. Some establishments may contaminate or drug drinks to gain control over the patron.

The loss or theft abroad of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Embassy and consulate staff can find appropriate medical care, contact family members or friends and explain how funds are transferred. Consular officers can help visitors understand the local criminal justice process and find an attorney if needed. No criminal investigation is possible without a formal complaint to Mexican authorities. Victims of crime may also report the crime to the Mexican Embassy or nearest consulate after arriving in the U.S. Before doing so, they should contact the U.S. Embassy or consulate in Mexico for assistance in coordinating with Mexican consular officials to obtain an official appointment for the victim or witness with the Mexican Embassy or consulate.

For any emergencies involving U.S. citizens in Mexico, contact the closest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. For more information, e-mail ccs@usembassy.net or visit www.usembassy-mexico.gov/.

The American Consulate in Juarez is located at Avenida Lopez Mateos 924-N. The phone number is (52) (656) 611-3000.

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should monitor the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet Web site at <http://travel.state.gov>, or call (888) 407-4747. If calling within Mexico, dial a regular toll line at 001-202-501-4444, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

Bliss Tax Center opens

COMPILED BY VIRGINIA REZA

Monitor Staff

The Fort Bliss Tax Center opened its doors Thursday during a ribbon cutting ceremony held in Bldg. 50.

The Tax Center offers free tax preparation for servicemembers, family members, retirees with more than 20 years of service and their family members, and surviving family members of active-duty, mobilized Reservists and retired Soldiers. The returns can be signed and electronically filed with the IRS that same day, and any refund due can be directly deposited into the taxpayer's bank account. There is no charge for electronic filing.

During the ceremony, Col. Randy T. Kirkvold, Fort Bliss staff judge advocate, congratulated and passed out certificates to servicemembers and civilian volunteers who were trained on preparing taxes for eligible clients.

"I want to right up front thank every one of you for completing the training," Kirkvold said. "You are really going to make a big impact in the community."

Visitors to the Tax Center must bring the proper documentation including all W-2s, valid social security cards for themselves and their dependents and, if applicable, a special power of attorney authorizing them to sign a tax return for someone who is unable to do so. An IRS Form 2848 is issued if a taxpayer is filing a joint return on behalf of their spouse or someone else. If relevant, also bring either Form 1099 INT or DIV, a mortgage interest statement; child care information; IRA contributions; documentation of sale of stocks; bonds or mutual funds; alimony paid or



VIRGINIA REZA

Col. Randy T. Kirkvold, Fort Bliss staff judge advocate, and Capt. Daniel R. Crumby, Tax Center officer in charge and an assistant attorney, cut the ribbon at the grand opening of the Fort Bliss Tax Center Thursday during a ceremony held in Bldg. 50.

received; and court orders for divorce and child custody and support. Without complete records, an accurate tax return cannot be completed and tax liability may be higher, said Capt. Daniel R. Crumby, Tax Center officer in charge and an assistant attorney.

Crumby said a common problem for Soldiers who lived at home the year before enlisting in the military is when their parents still claim them as dependents, resulting in tax return rejection. He advises Soldiers to call home and make sure their parents will not claim them this year. He said another thing to be aware of is the refund anticipation loan.

"If you choose to file with a private tax preparer and you receive a refund

anticipation loan, make sure you know what you are paying and that your preparer follows the law," Crumby said. "If you think you are wrongfully charged an incorrect amount, please consult your post's Legal Assistance Office."

Last tax season, the Tax Center prepared close to 4,000 returns and obtained more than \$5 million dollars in refunds.

"Please consider using our free Tax Centers," Crumby said. "Take advantage of this free service, as we look forward to serving all of your tax needs."

Walk-in and by appointment tax preparation is now available. For more information, call the Tax Center at 568-4999.

Green assumes command of brigade

VIRGINIA REZA

Monitor Staff

Col. Scott A. Marquardt relinquished command of the Mobilization and Deployment Brigade to Col. James Green Friday during a ceremony at the Fort Bliss Museum and Air Defense Artillery Museum and Study Center.

"It's time to reload and welcome another great commander to lead this brigade into the future," said Col. Robert T. Burns, Garrison commander and guest speaker. "He is a combat veteran from Iraq. He comes with a stellar reputation and is more than qualified to assume command today. He knows mobilization and understands the Global War on Terrorism and what is expected of units in theater today."

Green said there was no greater honor than commanding an organization that supports servicemembers called to duty to defend the country.

"I can find no greater passion in my soul than a passion to do this job," Green said. "One of my personal mottos I think you will find true in my command is 'Hubris has no place, humility is everything.'"

Burns commended Marquardt's command for living behind a legacy to be proud of. Burns talked about some of Marquardt's accomplishments, including the constant support of units mobilized here. Burns said under Marquardt's command, all Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines deploying from Fort Bliss were administratively prepared and properly equipped for theater.

During Marquardt's tenure, more than 24,000 servicemembers have deployed and redeployed. The brigade provided some of the most realistic training in the Army, said Burns. Marquardt "established capabilities that turned Fort Bliss into a premier mobilization and deployment site in the U.S. Army."

"Nothing was too hard for Scott or his team," Burns said. "They took on every

mission and always represented Team Bliss' mobilization proudly. When it comes to mobilization, these guys can flat out do it all."

Marquardt thanked Burns for his support and said Fort Bliss was the best place to mobilize through, not only because of the weather similar to that in Iraq, but also because of the efforts the staff makes to support the servicemembers.

Marquardt will retire at the end of March.

Green was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the armor branch upon graduation from the Citadel in South Carolina in 1980. His first duty assignment was as the assistant brigade motor officer at Headquarters Company, 1-77th Armor, Fort Carson, Colo. He was the director of Strategic Operations (Protection) prior to coming to Fort Bliss.

Green's military education includes the Armor Officer Basic Course, Airborne School, Junior Officer Maintenance Course, Armor Officer Advance Course, Combined Armed Services Staff School, Air Ground Operations School, Command and General Staff College, M1 Tank Commanders Course and Armor Battalion Pre-Command Course. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the Citadel in Charleston, S.C., and a juris doctorate in law and a master's in tax law from Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio.

His awards include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Iraq Campaign Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal, NATO Non-Article 5 Medal, GWOT Service Medal, Ohio Commendation Medal, Ohio Faithful Service Ribbon, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" Device, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Ribbon, and he is authorized to wear the Army Parachute Badge.



VIRGINIA REZA

Col. James Green, Mobilization and Deployment commander, takes the unit guidon from Col. Robert T. Burns, Garrison commander, during a Change of Command ceremony Friday at the Fort Bliss Museum and Air Defense Artillery Museum and Study Center.

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PHOTOS BY SGT. JONATHAN MONTGOMERY

Families line the airstrip to greet returning 3-43 ADA Soldiers during a homecoming ceremony Tuesday on Biggs Army Airfield. The unit was deployed to Southwest Asia in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

Welcome Home

3-43 ADA honored at ceremony

SGT. JONATHAN MONTGOMERY

11th ADA Bde. Public Affairs

Approximately 600 Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery, arrived back to an emotional homecoming with family and friends on Biggs Army Airfield Tuesday and Wednesday.

The "Courage and Honor" battalion deployed to Southwest Asia for 15 months in support of U.S. Central Command operations and the Global War on Terrorism.

Lt. Col. Brian Dunn and Command Sgt. Maj. Tedd Pritchard, the unit commander and commander sergeant major, respectively, led the first wave of Soldiers Tuesday evening into a reception area filled with anxiously waiting loved ones holding welcome-home signs, balloons and poster board pictures of their returning servicemembers.

"As much as you have anticipated (this homecoming), we have anticipated it," said Brig. Gen. Robert H. Woods, the 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command commanding general. "But no one has anticipated this more than your family. Thank you for a job very

well done. Our nation is truly grateful for your sacrifice."

With that said, Woods released the Soldiers into the arms of their families.

"It's the greatest feeling ever," Stephanie Cotton said of having her husband back home. "I don't want him to miss out on (three-month-old son Jason) growing."

Pfc. Brent Cotton spent time in theater working as a supply clerk before switching to a line battery. He said his deployment experience made him a more knowledgeable Soldier.

"Overall, I learned my job pretty well over there," he said. Now that he's back, Stephanie said they plan on spending time together "somewhere on a boat in the Caribbean."

"We're going to go on our honeymoon," she said.

For Staff Sgt. Broderick Gardner, homecoming means "catching up on family time," he said, including getting to know his daughter as a Girl Scout and showing them "some great pictures" of his overseas adventures. Constant conversation with his wife Teresa and their



Lt. Col. Brian Dunn and Command Sgt. Maj. Tedd Pritchard, 3-43 ADA commander and command sergeant major, respectively, lead a band of Soldiers into a reception area filled with waiting families Tuesday on Biggs Army Airfield.

children was what sustained him throughout the desert deployment, he said.

"We had a lot of communication," said Gardner. "It made the time seem really short."

Shea Graham, wife of Capt. Douglas Graham, the commander of E Battery, said the separation improved the means by which they normally communicated

when he was stateside. With him across the ocean, she said she could express herself more openly by putting her thoughts on paper.

"(The deployment) showed a commitment (for us to be able) to get through anything," she said. "It gave us a greater appreciation for keeping level-headed (during stressful times)."



Families line the airstrip to greet returning 3-43 ADA Soldiers during a homecoming ceremony Tuesday on Biggs Army Airfield. The unit was deployed to Southwest Asia for 15 months in support of the Global War on Terrorism.



Capt. Eric Figueroa and his wife, Victoria, embrace after being separated for more than a year.

2-6 ADA Soldiers raise their hands again

DANIELA VESTAL

Monitor Staff

Ten Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 6th Air Defense Artillery, reenlisted in a mass ceremony Jan. 30. A freeze on reenlistment bonuses was lifted the day before and these Soldiers were the first in the battalion to take advantage of the extra incentive.

“We have the opportunity to reenlist some outstanding Soldiers and (noncommissioned officers) ... to fill our ranks here,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Warren White, 2nd Bn., 6th ADA command sergeant major. “They would (have reenlisted) without a bonus to continue serving their country, even though we are a nation at war.”

The Soldiers received a variety of other incentives, including their station of choice and the opportunity to take part in a new program for to become drill sergeants.

Staff Sgt. Laurence Gardiner, operations noncom-



DANIELA VESTAL

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 6th Air Defense Artillery, reenlist in a mass ceremony Jan. 30.

missioned officer in charge, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2-6 ADA, is the first Soldier in the brigade to take advantage of the new program.

“I’ve always wanted to (be a drill sergeant) and so I finally had an opportunity to do it without having to go

through the request process,” Gardiner said.

In addition to the 10 who reenlisted Wednesday, four more from the unit are scheduled to follow suit throughout the week.

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Army arts and Crafts contest spotlights winners

TIM HIPPS

Family and MWR Command Public Affairs

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – More than 200 Soldiers, including those serving in Iraq and Kuwait, civilians, family members and MWR patrons from 39 garrisons generated 530 entries in the 2007 Army Arts and Crafts Contest.

Crafts were entered in 2D and 3D categories in ceramics, drawings, fibers and textiles, glass, metals and jewelry, oil- and water-based painting, wood, and mixed media and further divided into novice and accomplished artist divisions.

The accomplished division was for competitors who have gained skills and knowledge through formal courses leading to credit in college or art schools. Those whose skills had not been acquired in formal education competed in the novice division.

Several competitors, such as Army veteran Myrna Hawkins, said they feel like they have spent their art “careers” producing entries for the Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command-sponsored event. Thirty-two contestants were returning participants and 175 entered for the first time.

First-place winners received \$300, runners-up \$200 and third-place finishers \$100. Contestants who received honorable mentions were issued certificates of excellence.

“Ceramics is a great stress reliever,” said Hawkins, whose “African Influence” placed first in the accomplished metals and jewelry category and “The Mask” earned runner-up honors in mixed media 3-D. “When you put your hand in the clay and start to work, a peace just seems to come over you. I can’t quite explain, but it’s wonderful.”

Several years ago, an Army MWR employee in the embroidery section of the arts and crafts shop at Fort Hood, Texas, urged Hawkins to enter the contest.

“I really am amazed each time I win anything, because if someone would have asked me a few years ago if would I be doing what I am right now, I would probably say ‘no,’” said Hawkins, 44, who is now majoring in fine arts at the University of Mary Harden-Baylor. “If I

couldn’t be creative, I don’t know what I would do. Get dirty! Work in clay! It’s awesome!”

Capt. Hee Kim, a hobby origamiist since elementary school who is stationed at Fort Stewart, Ga., won the novice mixed media 3D category with “Ancient Dragon.” Origami is the Japanese art of folding paper into decorative or representational forms, such as animals or flowers.

Kim followed the original design of a piece created by renowned origamiist Satoshi Kamiya.

His wife, professional artist Anni Mirka Kim, placed second in accomplished drawing with “Spirit and Perseverance” and third in accomplished prints with “70 Percent of Grains.”

Sgt. 1st Class Melvin Avis’ woodwork “Bob Burn” topped the novice mixed media 2D category and his “Lil Duckhunter” earned an honorable mention. Now stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., Avis found time to hone his skills while at Camp Victory in Iraq.

“It actually provided a little piece of home to me while I was away,” said Avis, 37. “It is nice to sort of get away doing something you like, even if it is for just a little while.”

Avis, who discovered the contest on Army Knowledge Online, had personal

motivation for both of his winning woodworks. He produced “Bob Burn” for a military working dog program manag-



Capt. Hee Kim, a hobby origamiist since elementary school who is now stationed at Fort Stewart, Ga., won the novice mixed media 3-D category of the 2007 Army Arts and Crafts Contest with “Ancient Dragon.” Origami is the Japanese art of folding paper into decorative or representational forms, such as animals or flowers.

er at Fort McPherson, Ga.

“Bob, a military working dog, was on the initial push into Iraq,” Avis explained. “It was a somber moment when they finally had to put him to rest.”

Avis created “Lil Duckhunter” for one



Staff Sgt. Johnnie Williams of Fort Lee, Va., won the novice oil-based painting category of the 2007 Army Arts and Crafts Contest with “A Day at Sailing.”

of his buddies.

“It was his son’s first duck hunt in Arkansas and everything about the picture, from the sunrise down to the Red Ryder BB gun, sort of drew my attention to it,” he said. “It was also the first time I had ever attempted a wood burning of a person.”

Sgt. Maj. Steve Carter, who instructed art classes for Soldiers from inside a tent in Iraq, placed second in the novice metals and jewelry category with a bronze statue titled

“The Guardian” while serving in the U.S. Army-Europe chaplain’s office in Heidelberg, Germany. Carter, who also makes knives, now works in the Training and Doctrine Command chaplain’s office at Fort Monroe, Va.

Terry Flemings has taken classes in etching, wood shop and framing at the arts and crafts facility on Fort Hood.

“I always find time to do something with art and my artwork because it mellows my mind,” said Flemings, whose “Waldo’s Porch in the Spring” placed third in novice water base painting.

Flemings, an administrative assistant at Carl R. Darnell Army Medical Center, wishes she had more free time for her art.

“The more I paint, the more I realize that I truly have a gift,” she said. “I could paint all day. My goal is to reverse my life ... I want to paint eight hours a day, continue my fitness to maintain my health, and then maybe work – if I need to.”

May 25 is the submission deadline for the 2008 Army Arts and Crafts Contest. Authorized MWR patrons, with the exception of employees of the Army Arts and Crafts program, are eligible to enter. All submissions must be the entrant’s original work and must be completed within 24 months of the beginning of the contest year.

For more details, write to FWRC Attn: FMWR-CR (Arts & Crafts), 4700 King Street, 4th floor, Alexandria, Va., 22302-4418 or call Linda Ezernieks at (703) 681-7754.



Trevor Harding of Camp Zama, Japan, won the accomplished wood category of the 2007 Army Arts and Crafts Contest with “Lewis Chessmen & Table.”



Sgt. Maj. Steve Carter, who instructed art classes for Soldiers from inside a tent in Iraq, placed second in the novice metals and jewelry category of the 2007 Army Arts and Crafts Contest with a bronze statue titled “The Guardian.” Carter, who also makes knives, works in the TRADOC chaplain’s office at Fort Monroe, Va.

286th Signal Company certifies crews during field training exercise

SGT. JONATHAN MONTGOMERY

11th ADA Bde. Public Affairs

McGREGOR RANGE, N.M. – Soldiers from the 286th Signal Company conducted crew certifications on their signal equipment during a weeklong field training exercise at McGregor Range, N.M., Jan. 25 through Friday.

Evaluators tested Soldiers on their ability to create an operable signal connection between two different



Spc. Deione Stevens from the 286th Signal Company works to ground a piece of signal equipment during a crew certification exercise at McGregor Range Jan. 29.

locations using the equipment they emplaced within a fixed amount of time.

Throughout the exercise, teams of Soldiers from the only signal company on Fort Bliss took turns being evaluated according to proficiency standards for setting up small extension nodes and syncing up other communication links.

“Everybody knew their job, so there was no running around,” said Sgt. Leopoldo Mendoza, a section team sergeant. “We just practiced and had a plan of putting people where they’re strong.”

“Basically, we’re extending the tactical site out to subscribers to provide them with phone, Internet, e-mail,” said Spc. Derek Clark, a network switch board systems operator and maintainer, who was put in charge of overseeing the evaluation process.

Spc. Franklin De Los Santos, a signal team member, said he appreciated the fact that “everyone had exact assignments,” such as someone to ground the antenna and another to ground the cables, in order to establish a signal.

“This is first time, hands-on training that refreshes your brain,” he said. “You come away feeling like you learned something.”

Overall, teamwork was an essential element when having to overcome unforeseen training challenges separate from crew certification, said 1st Sgt. Kevin Taylor, the 286th Signal Company first sergeant, who cited, for instance, the rebuilding of burnt circuit cards.

“There have been quite a few challenges,” he said. “It’s a matter of learning to work with each other and trust each other that makes a huge difference. Through it all, we’ve been able to learn through adversity and work through our mission to turn things around.”



PHOTOS BY SGT. JONATHAN MONTGOMERY

Soldiers from the 286th Signal Company work to emplace their signal equipment during a crew certification exercise at McGregor Range Jan. 29.

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Motorcycle safety a concern for all

DANIELA VESTAL

Monitor Staff

With the coming of warmer weather, rising fuel costs and hundreds of incoming Soldiers, the issue of motorcycle safety is a top concern for the Fort Bliss community, said Jean Offutt, Fort Bliss public affairs officer.

According to Army Regulation 385-10, motorcyclists on Fort Bliss must meet seven requirements:

- Helmets certified to meet Department of Transportation standards, must be properly fastened under the chin. Outside the continental U.S. riders may wear HN helmets if it meets or exceeds U.S. DOT standards.

- Impact- or shatter-resistant goggles, wraparound glasses or full-face shields properly attached to the helmet must meet or exceed American National Standards Institute Safety Code Z87.1 for impact and shatter resistance. A windshield alone is not proper eye protection.

- Sturdy footwear, leather boots or over-the-ankle shoes must be worn.

- A long-sleeved shirt or jacket, long trousers and full-fingered gloves or mittens designed for use on a motorcycle must be worn.

- For on-road operations, a brightly colored outer-upper garment during the day and a reflective upper garment during the night must be worn. Military uniforms do not meet these criteria. The outer garment shall be clearly visible and not covered. Items may be worn on top of the outer garment, but they must meet the same vis-



ibility requirements of the outer-upper garment.

- During off-road operations, operators and riders must use additional personal protective equipment, such as knee and shin guards and padded, full-fingered gloves.

- Installation commanders will ensure motorcycle operators, when entering the installation, are properly licensed, have successfully completed a motorcycle rider course and are wearing the required personal motorcycle safety equipment.

“There is a lot of emphasis on motorcycle safety because every year the Army has exceeded the previous year of motorcycle fatalities,” said Rudy Pino, Safety Office assistant director.

The motorcycle rider course is offered free of charge to Department of Defense personnel and civilians. It does not cover the charge for retirees, contractors and military family members, Pino said.

In the past, most motorcycle accidents have been caused by the other driver, but lately accidents involving Soldiers have been the fault of the motorcyclist, safety officials said.

“So far it’s been the motorcycle rider, negligence on their part,” said Ernie Bautista, safety technician. “It hasn’t been the other driver in the last two years.”

Bautista worries that with 1,400 motorcyclists already on Fort Bliss and more troops with more motorcycles coming in, the accident rate is

only going to get worse.

The command sergeant major of 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade, Bryan McGhee, said his unit has an outstanding record for motorcycle safety.

“We don’t have any deaths in (our unit) from motorcycle accidents,” said McGhee. “I think that’s attributed in large part because we have leadership involvement.”

McGhee said he is always looking at parked motorcycles and checking them for things like proper registration and tires that are not bald and are in good working condition.

“Then I ask the question, ‘Who owns that motorcycle?’” McGhee said. “What that does is it leads me into a whole bunch of other questions like, ‘OK, well does this Soldier have all the necessary safety gear? Where is the Soldier planning on going this weekend? Is the Soldier planning on riding? Who is he or she riding with?’ If a Soldier thinks nobody is engaged, they will go off and do what they feel they are big enough to do and generally ride over their heads on fast motorcycles and end up getting killed.”

McGhee said he ensures all of his Soldiers are aware of his interest in their safety and their behavior on a motorcycle because he wants to be certain he does not ever have to call a parent to let them know their son or daughter is dead because he did not do his job as a sergeant major.

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Combatives an alternative to lethal force

MAJ. DEANNA BAGUE

Fort Bliss Public Affairs

The Army combatives program offers Soldiers an alternative to use in unarmed self-defense situations where the use of lethal force is not warranted, said Army officials. There are circumstances both here and in theater where combatives has been effective in dealing with non-life-threatening conditions.

"If the enemy is unarmed and a Level 2 (combative) engages the enemy in hand-to-hand combat, the Level 2 will have a better chance to take that enemy down to the ground, use strikes to open up a submission and finish the fight," said Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Banis, Combatives Program noncommissioned officer in charge, 3rd Battalion, 6th Air Defense Artillery.

Bannis said the use of combatives is not limited to the battlefield. Staff Sgt. John Atnip, police intelligence analyst and combatives NCOIC for the 72nd Military Police Detachment, agrees with Banis. Military police officers have a working knowledge of unarmed self-defense tactics due to the training they receive in MP Advanced Individual Training, said Atnip. Combatives adds to that base, he said.

"It is helpful to keep the MPs fresh on combatives techniques," said Atnip.

There are four levels in the combatives course. Atnip is Level-2 certified, meaning he is able to instruct Soldiers from his unit in Level 1 combatives for training.



MAJ. DEANNA BAGUE

Sgt. Mario Gonzalez, left, F Company, 5th Battalion, 52nd Air Missile Defense, 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, and Pvt. Robbie Hinojos, 11th ADA, demonstrate how to use combatives techniques to apprehend an unruly subject played by Pfc. Walter Iverson, 11th ADA.

"Our job requires us to put hands on someone to apprehend them if they become unruly or forceful," said Atnip. "We must know how to do this and defend ourselves at the same time."

For example, combatives training is beneficial when responding to domestic violence occurrences in case the

subject is intoxicated and threatening but not to the extent where one's life is in danger, said Atnip. In this case, a weapon would not be used to apprehend and handcuff the individual.

Another benefit combatives offers Soldiers is a decrease in collateral damage, said Bannis.

"If a Soldier is threatened by

unarmed civilians, you don't want to use arms blazing," said Bannis.

"Any type of situation where you're dealing with someone who's aggressive and you have to control him or her, combatives comes in handy," he added. "Combatives is a nonlethal force against an aggressor."

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31st ADA conducts equipment move

SPC. BROOKS FLETCHER

31st ADA Bde. Public Affairs

As their restationing to Fort Sill, Okla., approaches, one brigade here is systematically tying up all their loose ends.

Ramping up their last battalion here for an overseas mission, the 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade spearheaded the movement of Patriot equipment to arrive in Fort Hood, Texas, in support of a geographically distant battalion.

The unit came together during the 2nd Battalion, 1st Air Defense Artillery's equipment move Jan. 28 through Friday.



Capt. John Barlow confirms vehicle departure information during the 2nd Battalion, 1st Air Defense Artillery, equipment move Jan. 28.

After returning from a rotation to Korea, 2-1 ADA was restationed to Fort Hood. When the Soldiers of 1-44 ADA departed for Korea, they left equipment behind to be handed over to the sister unit.

Working out of a tactical operation center in 1-44 ADA's motor pool and maintaining communication with various staging and loading areas throughout Fort Bliss, the brigade conducted a seamless, undisturbed operation.

The brigade shipped out various types of equipment during the five-day process, broken down into planning and preparation, execution, reception and recovery phases.

Sgt. 1st Class Adrian Patterson, noncommissioned officer in charge of the tactical operation center, juggled walkie-talkies, receiving information from the staging and loading stations as they relayed departure information back and forth.

Sgt. 1st Class Antonio Sanders, noncommissioned officer in charge of the loading station, commented on his crew's speed and proficiency during the loading phase.

"There aren't many crews out there that can do what we are doing," Sanders, whose crew coined themselves "Power Push 3," for their speedy load times, said jokingly.



PHOTOS BY SPC. BROOKS FLETCHER

Staff Sgt. Jared Towsey, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade, guides a military vehicle onto a truck trailer destined for Fort Hood, Texas.

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1-44 ADA Soldier recounts trip to Korean DMZ

1ST LT. ZACHARY DENTON

1st Bn., 44th ADA

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea – The demilitarized zone is a constant reminder of a conflict the world often refers to as the “Forgotten War.” It is the scar of a country that was once united, but torn apart as a result of political differences and Cold War influences; a war that resulted in 1.5 million casualties, 400,000 dead, billions of dollars spent, and a world that spiraled into paranoia and uncertainty. The Korean War’s impact on the world is often overlooked, but nevertheless set the world’s stage for the next 50 years.

As I walked to and from the different historical sights during A Battery, 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery’s tour of the DMZ, these sobering facts became alarmingly real.

The tour began with a scenic four-hour bus ride through Korea’s countryside. The first destination was the Third Tunnel of Aggression, a passage from North Korea to South Korea, running 1.1 miles long and 239 feet below the ground. This is just one of several tunnels North Korean forces dug in order to carry out surprise attacks on South Korea.

As we donned our hard hats and descended into the tunnel, I was immediately struck by the dense humidity. As water seeped from pipes and dripped from cave tops, we made our way to the demarcation line. The walls were blackened from North Korean attempts to disguise the tunnel for coal-mining purposes. The closer we got to the demarcation zone, the more it felt as if the

walls were collapsing in on us. The tunnel became so narrow that, for 200 meters, I walked completely hunched over, trying to avoid hitting my head on the tunnel ceiling. When we finally reached the demarcation zone, I was somewhat surprised at what I saw. The area was cordoned off with barbed wire and the passage was barricaded with a large slab of concrete. A one-square-foot window was in the upper left corner of the barricade, allowing a glimpse of the other side; unfortunately, it was too dark to see anything interesting. The tour guide said the other side of the barricade was rigged with land mines and barbed wire to prevent North Korean invaders. After this somewhat disconcerting fact, we made the hike back to the ramp and climbed up to the surface.

Our next destination was the Dora Observatory located on Mount Dora, on the 38th Parallel.

From the observatory, we had the rare opportunity to see a North Korean propaganda village known as Peace Village, or Kijŏng-Dong, in North Korea, and Propaganda Village in South Korea. We also saw several guard towers used, to this day, to keep a constant watch on South Korean activity. The Propaganda Village flaunts the world’s largest flagpole, 160 meters tall, due to what many call the “flagpole wars.” It was deemed this after Kijŏng-Dong originally raised the flag only to have Daeseong Dong, located directly across in South Korea, extend their flag taller. Kijŏng-Dong quickly raised their flag to ensure vertical prowess.

Our final stop was the Joint Security



1ST LT. ZACHARY DENTON

The Dora Observatory is on the South Korean side of the 38th parallel. Situated on top of Mount Dora, the observatory looks across the demilitarized zone. It is the part of South Korea closest to the North.

Area, known to Koreans as “Panmunjom.” The JSA is the only neutral area between North and South Korea and is the location of diplomatic peace talks between the two sides. It is also the site where many of the war’s most memorable events occurred. Most notably, the Korean Armistice Agreement was negotiated and signed July 27, 1953. To this day, Korean guards on both sides stand at the position of attention, competing in what seems like a staring match, displaying a show of force to one another. Korean soldiers stand at the foot of each building, with the wall bisecting their bodies. This is to display less of a target in the event

North Korean soldiers attempt an attack. Before entering the JSA, we were given explicit instructions on how to conduct ourselves while under the observation of North Korean guards. All waving, hand motions, signaling, shouting, or any attempt to communicate with the North Koreans is strictly forbidden. We entered the JSA negotiations building and had the opportunity to take pictures with Korean soldiers standing guard. We were also able to cross over to the North Korean side, reserving us the unique right to claim our visit to North Korea.

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College football all-stars sign autographs at Stout

HEATHER WILBURN

Special to The Monitor

When more than 100 college football all-stars competing in the Texas vs. The Nation All-Star Challenge filled the gymnasium at Stout Physical Fitness center Thursday, they weren't working out.

Instead, the athletes were at Fort Bliss to take part in an autograph session that gave football fans a chance to meet their favorite players.

Many of the players saw the auto-

graph session as a chance to give back to the community.

“We’ve been in El Paso since Sunday,” said Tim Hightower of the University of Richmond. “(This is) nice. I didn’t even know we were coming here, but it’s a good thing to do for the Soldiers, I think.”

"It's good to give back to the community any way you can," agreed Antwaun Molden of Eastern Kentucky University.

Frank Morton of Tulane University said El Paso has been good to the Texas vs. The Nation players, and the autograph session was a chance to repay that kindness.

"It's good to come out here, sign autographs and give back what we can," he said. "El Paso has been good to us, and this is our way of being good to El Paso."

Sgt. Maj. David Kiel, sergeant major of the Warrior Transition Battalion, said the session was a case of “great Americans taking care of great Americans.”

"Soldiers have to fight the war, and that's what the men and women in my great unit have done," he said. "These (athletes) are soldiers of a different type – these are soldiers who entertain us, the youth of this country who do their part by entertaining the Soldiers who go to war.

"I'm just here to say thank you to these great Americans," Kiel said. "It



PHOTOS BY HEATHER WIL BURN

From left, Marcus Dixon of Hampton University, Antwaun Molden of Eastern Kentucky University and Tim Hightower of the University of Richmond sign autographs for fans including Alyson Wright, 12, during Thursday's Texas vs. The Nation autograph session at Stout Physical Fitness Center.

doesn't matter what team or what part of the country they're from, they're great American kids ... On behalf of myself and my command, I

want to thank the great Americans, both in and out of uniform, who showed up to do what they did today.”

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Law restricts political involvement of military

CHRIS RASMUSSEN

Army News Service

FORT JACKSON, S.C. – As the election year kicks off, there are many questions concerning Army policies that restrict both political activities by Soldiers and Department of Defense civilians, and candidates' use of DoD facilities for political events.

According to Army Regulation 360-1, political candidates are prohibited from using military installations for political assemblies, meetings, fundraising events, press conferences or any other activity that could be construed as political in nature.

"Once a candidate declares or registers, that portion of the guidance applies," said Ed Spells, chief of poli-

cy and doctrine, Army Public Affairs Center.

Members of Congress, even if they are up for re-election, may visit Army installations to receive briefings, attend official events and receive tours.

Candidates who are not members of Congress may be given the same access to installations as any other visitor. Prior to visiting an installation, all political candidates must be informed that all political activity and media events are prohibited.

Candidates are not permitted to film or tape campaign commercials in front of military equipment or Army installations and facilities. Army support to political meetings, ceremonies

or similar events, including Soldiers, bands and color guards, is also not allowed.

In addition to restrictions on candidates, Soldiers and federal employees are also limited when it comes to political participation.

"The political campaign season is upon us, with caucuses and primaries busting out all over," said Col. Donald Curry, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command staff judge advocate. "As Soldiers and federal employees, our activities in this regard are governed by federal law, Department of Defense directives and Army regulation."

"Active-duty servicemembers and federal civilian employees are encour-

aged to get involved in political activities and fulfill their obligations as United States citizens," he added. "However, certain political activities that create a real or apparent conflict of interest with their federal employment are expressly prohibited."

While serving on active duty or working as a federal employee, certain political activities and types of speech are prohibited.

Servicemembers may participate in local nonpartisan political activities as long as they are not in uniform and the activity does not require government property or resources, interfere with official duties or imply government involvement. But they must refrain from participating in political activities while in uniform or while wearing official insignias, according to Curry, and avoid activities prejudicial to the performance of military duties or likely to bring discredit on the service.

Soldiers on active duty and Army civilians are prohibited from engaging in the following political activities:

- Using one's official authority to influence or interfere with an election; soliciting votes for a particular candidate or issue and soliciting political contributions from others.

- Running for the nomination or as a candidate for election to a partisan political office or holding such political office to include state or local civil office.

- Participating in partisan political management, campaigns and conventions or making speeches before a partisan political gathering, including any gathering that promotes a partisan political party, candidate or cause.

- Attending partisan events as an official representative of the U.S. Armed Forces or serving in any official capacity as a sponsor of a partisan political club.

- Displaying large political signs, banners or posters on private vehicles.

- Promoting political dinners or fundraising events, distributing partisan political literature, or conducting a political opinion survey under the auspices of a political partisan group.

- Participating in any radio, television or other program or group discussion as an advocate for or against a partisan political party, candidate or cause.

- Soliciting or otherwise engaging in fundraising activities in federal offices or facilities for a partisan political cause or candidate, including selling tickets for political dinners and similar fundraising events.

- Making a contribution to, or receiving a contribution from, another member of the U.S. Armed Forces or a federal civilian employee for the purpose of promoting a political objective or cause, giving speeches, writing articles or providing public comments that contain political material, in one's capacity as a service representative.

The following states will hold Primary elections early in 2008. An asterisk indicates a change from the date printed in the Voting Assistance Guide:

- Texas, March 4

For more information, contact your unit voting assistance officer/S1 or the installation voting assistance officer at 568-7432.

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